4:Fleure S-5 (no date)1936 ED1 Rumania ED1

IV.—PEOPLES AND SETTLEMENTS: EARLY TIMES

[131] THE POSITION OF ROUMANIA with its mountain ramparts forming an outpost of central Europe, over against the south Russian steppe on the one hand and the Balkan peninsula on the other, has been emphasised in a brief review of its features and relief and climate. The same fact of position is most important in the study of its human relations throughout history, and here it is necessary to emphasise once more that relations between the south Russian and Hungarian plains in the far past have been carried on *via* the Carpathian passes rather than by the Iron Gates which may well have been impassable until Trajan's engineering feat made a platform along the right bank, and the temporariness of that construction suggests that the grim defile did not remain in use. To what extent some detours not very far away may have been utilised at various periods is a matter for research.

172 174 TOO LITTLE is known concerning Roumania in the Old Stone Age to permit of any useful discussion, but the country was much affected when, in the relatively short Neolithic period heralding the advent of metal, a cultivating population was spreading westward through central Europe. It is a matter for further research to decide to what extent south Russia and to what extent Thrace were routes of this first peasant [177] civilisation in its spread westwards. The earliest agriculturists of Roumania, in their equipment, show relationships or participation of ideas with contemporaries in the Ukraine, in the Balkan peninsula, including Vinça near Belgrade, and Thessaly, and in north Hungary, Roumania yielding specially important material from Cucuteni, near Iaşi, from Erösd in the south-east of Transylvania, and from Tordos in central Transylvania on the upper Olt. The former has yielded figurines that are female and steatopygous, but without the large breasts and general development of fat that occur in some other centres. The pottery is painted, and on the whole it seems that, at this stage, the Ukraine was richer; we may well be dealing with a spread that was to some extent westward, using passes of the south-eastern Carpathians (Fig. 4). At the same time it should be borne in mind that the Olt, the Mureş and several other rivers of Transylvania yielded

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gold, while copper was found in those regions as well, so the desire for these materials may have brought settlers here apart from the general spread of pioneering cultivators which is perhaps better attested further west. In Lower Austria and Moravia the equipment of the very early cultivators includes ornaments of Spondylus shells that in several cases have come from the Mediterranean, indicating already at that primeval stage of the development of civilisation those wide-ranging links which seem so generally to have been, and to be, factors of progress. This thought is further supported by a knowledge that the Roumano-Ukrainian area seems to show links with far-off Elam, north-east of the Persian Gulf.

We may provisionally picture the pioneers of settlement and cultivation as spreading from the south-east some time in the latter half of the third millennium B.C., as yet shifting their villages from time to time, probably because schemes of rotation in land-use and of dung-manuring had not come into operation. They seem to have preferred sites on the Loess as would be expected, because that material is fertile, and usually less wooded than areas of clay subsoil. They apparently met and probably incorporated into their groups remnants of older hunting groups, but they were concerned with cultivation, apparently using especially stone hoes ground into the shape of a shoe-last. Hoe cultivation suggests, by analogy with modern Africa, that a good deal of the work was done by women. The figurines show that great importance was attached to the idea of fertility, symbolised by woman; this is often described as "Worship of the Mother-Goddess," a description that may be correct, or may perhaps give a somewhat too definite impression. That sooner, rather than later, the early cultivators interested themselves in gold washing and in copper seems to stand out fairly clearly. They became considerable artists in pottery, and appear to have built rectangular houses with a porch, partly open, and an inner room. The possible relationship of this (Megaron) scheme to later ones in the Aegean and Greece, leading right on to the classical Greek temple, gives it a great interest; it is widely agreed that the main ideas of the construction of the classical Greek temple were derived from forested lands well to the north. The houses appear to have often been agglomerated, as one would expect, and the group had a rampart-ditch around it. The people used bows

172 and arrows and valued deer-horn for making holders for
174 stone axes and for other purposes. Later, perhaps, hunting became more important, and incised ornament on the pottery became a feature here as it was also further west-north-west.

THERE SEEM indications that, as time passed, aristocratic herders spread among the early cultivators, and they emphasise connections between the Ukrainian steppe and Hungary across the south-eastern Carpathians and down the Mureş. Copper axe-adzes, some with a median hole for the shaft, have been found at various spots, chiefly in Transylvania, as Childe has well shown. It is thought that the hole was punched through the heated metal and not cast. Ornaments and other details suggest that the aristocracy at least had some connections with the Aegean, and bronze was gradually introduced, as a copper-antimony alloy at first. Parvan has emphasised the importance of the Carpathian area in the Bronze Age, with fine workmanship in bronze and gold, and, in the late Bronze Age and the transition to the early Iron Age, the culture connections seem to have been mainly westward, the analogies with north Italian bronze cauldrons being specially noteworthy. There are several indications that in this period, which, in Europe, seems to have been one of dry warm summers, the south Russian steppes were relatively empty. Probably the previous spread across the south-eastern Carpathians had brought westward horsemen, either already armed with the sword or about to learn to make it, a weapon that would suit cavalry better than the axe-adze of older days. In the transition from bronze to iron the Transylvanian Carpathians were thus the eastern limit of an area including Hungary and North Italy, while southward they were linked with Attica. Agriculture had doubtless improved, settlements had become more or less permanent as it is likely that a rotatory scheme of soil use had been evolved; craftsmanship in gold and bronze for luxury objects had reached a high level.

175 THE PICTURE changes again dramatically round about 700 B.C., through two mutually supplementary influences. Firstly, the climates of Denmark and Switzerland became colder and wetter, so probably that of the Carpathians felt the influence of a lowering of the snow-line and an impoverishment of agriculture and craftsmanship. Iron work had